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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the relationship of the Chinese National Academy of Educational Administration, the Asian Development Bank, and a consulting U.S. university in a project to provide technical assistance for senior Chinese university administrators in management training and modernization of facilities. Although the higher education component in China is relatively small, the central government expects it to play a key role in social and economic development. The government also wants to decentralize university administration and reduce its share of the financial burden, but at the same time not lose complete control. Sections of the paper discuss the development of Chinese higher education, sources of funding for higher education, private higher education, the need to decentralize the administrative structure, and issues of efficiency, effectiveness, and expansion. Issues addressed include free education in China losing out to market forces; a growing disparity between rich and poor; increasing demand for higher education as a result of the growth of secondary education; and the need for legal codes on which to base policies and protect the rights of institutions, their administrators, faculty, and students. (Contains 25 references.) (RH)

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Paper Title: **Higher education in China: Consulting for the Asian Development Bank on Higher Education Reform.**[1]

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Abstract

This paper examines the relationship of the Chinese National Academy of Educational Administration (NAEA), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and a US university within the context of consulting for organizational transformation of higher education in China. The Academy is the organization responsible, under the direction of the Ministry of Education for training university administrators.

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Paper Title: **Higher education in China: Consulting for the Asian Development Bank on Higher Education Reform**[2]

Author: James Mauch, Professor, Administrative & Policy Studies, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260, USA. mauch+@pitt.edu

Abstract

This paper examines the relationship of the Chinese National Academy of Educational Administration (NAEA), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and a US university within the context of organizational transformation of higher education in China. The Academy is the organization responsible, under the direction of the Ministry of Education for training university administrators.

Methodology

The methodology of the paper consists of an interpretation of events and documents in China in the recent past. Although there is a direction indicated in the reform of higher education in China, it is not possible to ascertain all the influences, and their relative weights, on this direction. Thus this paper will examine the change and reform in higher education in the context of changes in the NAEA, the Chinese institution officially charged with administrative training in institutions of higher education. It is an interpretive study in that it seeks to understand and interpret a limited number of events in the changes in higher education in the 1990's. Rather this paper will try to link what is or what has been with what might be in the future of Chinese higher education. In this paper the concept of influence is one of being an instrument of public policy, and working for change within that framework.

According to the theory, "building socialism with Chinese characteristics," the Fourteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China established the major framework of reform and development in the 1990's, clearly pointing out "that China must make education a strategic priority. It is of fundamental importance to China's modernization drive to raise the ideological and ethical standards of the entire population as well as its scientific and educational levels." (Department of Foreign Affairs of the State Education Commission of the P.R.C.)

A Survey of the Development of Chinese Higher Education

To understand the changes, a brief review of the historical context of higher education in China is necessary. Higher education in the Western sense, came to China recently. For example, Tianjin University, thought to be one of the first, was funded in 1895. Because of lack of funds, national development, and almost constant warfare, higher education was underdeveloped by the time of the founding of the People's Republic of China. In 1947, there were only 207 institutions of higher learning throughout the country with a total enrollment of 154,600. From 1912 to 1947, only 210,000 people completed their studies in these institutions.

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[2] Paper prepared for the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, San Antonio, TX, November 17, 1999.

In terms of modern Western style universities, China began in the late nineteenth century, when modern higher institutions like those of Europe and North America, were established on a new basis, as traditional ones gradually disintegrated (Hayhoe 1994).

Modern China attached great importance to the development of higher education. By the late 1980's, the government of the People's Republic of China faced the task of governing 1 billion people, handling foreign contracts worth several billion yuan, completely restructuring its economy, and restoring its shattered schools and universities to make them places where intellectual and scientific research could flourish at accepted international standards (Spence, 1990).

In 1993, *The Outline of Chinese Education Reform and Development* was adopted by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and the State Council. This document provides current guidelines for the educational development and for the 21st century. *The Outline* delineates the importance of the open door policy, the expansion of international educational exchange and enhancing educational development and administration (Central Committee).

Since 1986 the State Education Commission (SEdC) which replaced the Ministry the Education, has been responsible for administering, and setting policies for, China's educational system. The recent reform issues of higher education were outlined in 1992 when Chinese senior leader, Mr. Deng Xiaoping published his speech during his tour in south China. His speech stipulated that education must be oriented to modernization, the world and the future (Department of Foreign Affairs, 1994). At that time, the SEdC took measures to further the reform of the management system of higher education.

In summary, *The Outline* frames the higher education reform issues including:

- Diversification of the sources of funding for institutions of higher education.
- Decentralization of the administrative structure and expansion of university autonomy.
- Reconstruction of universities for efficiency, effectiveness, and reasonable expansion.

Diversification of funding sources for higher education

The Peoples' Republic of China is focusing on the reform of higher education as well as the reform of the economy. Reform in these areas means establishing the socialist market economy, openness, modernization, and decentralization. Chinese universities face many challenges in the 1990's, as they adapt to the economic exigencies of market socialism, and as they face a rapid expansion towards mass higher education (Hayhoe, 1994).

China operates the world's largest education system with a total student population of over 208 million (1993) in the formal system and over 54 million in the non-formal sector. However, the higher education component is relatively small with a student population in formal higher education of only slightly over 2.5 million and in non-formal (adult higher education may in some ways be a better term) higher education of less than 1.9 million. In 1993, the intake into formal higher education was 0.9 million or a gross enrollment ratio of less than 4% (China Education Daily, 1994).

Although higher education reforms began immediately after the Cultural Revolution in the late 1970's, reform officially started in 1985, when the central government wanted to begin decentralization and reduce its financial burden. In short, the financial reform in education aimed at devolving the financial responsibility to lower levels of government, diversifying the funding of education to more government agencies and creating new sources of funding in the non-government sector. Most higher education institutions in China receive less than 50% of their income from state appropriations. (Cheng Kai-ming, 1995).

There are three types of governmental higher education institutions in China, funded and administered differently (Table 1). National universities and colleges are administered and financed by the State Education Commission. SEdC also is responsible for the overall guidance of the higher education system of the country through formulating policies, decrees and plans of the state. Specialized universities and colleges are administered and financed by the central line ministries, such as the Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Machinery Industry. The local universities and colleges are administered and financed by provincial level governmental agencies, including a few by local governments with provincial supervision (Min Wiefang, n.d.).

Table 1. Regular Higher Education Institutions by Financial Affiliation

Affiliation	Institutions	Enrollment	Teachers
SEdC	36	255,699	47,484
Other Ministries	325	853,217	141,009
Provinces	704	1,426,601	199,314
Total	1,065	2,535,517	387,807

Source: Department of Planning, State Education Commission of China, 1993.

Private (Minban) Higher Education

Although there are 1065 public institutions, in recent years there have emerged about 800 Minban (private) colleges and universities, which were established by local communities, associations and individuals (Min Weifang, n.d.). After the Cultural Revolution, private education surfaced at all levels. According to the SEdC, private colleges were generally sponsored, funded, and run by State industrial enterprises, social groups (well-known retired scholars, various professional or business groups, or private citizens interested in education.

At first, the term "private education" was not acceptable. Consequently some educators labeled it non-governmental education. However, since Article 19 of the Constitution permits it ("the government encourages collective economic organizations, state organizations and other social groups in sponsoring education under the law") the term "private education" has become increasingly acceptable, as long as institutions of this kind follow the rules set by the government and the SEdC (Zhou Muriel, 1995).

Though private institutions are active, flexible and adaptive to the labor market needs, serving as a complement to the public higher education, they are so small and unstable, that there are few official statistics available about them (Min Weifang, n.d.)

The financial reform has permitted institutions to develop new sources of income and the more established institutions are able to cover their expenditures. However, new resources are often created at the expense of some fundamental responsibilities of the institutions. For example, apart from the state appropriation, which dictates its usage by strict formulas, there are also stipulations for the deployment of income generated by the institutions itself. The reform in higher education policies is partly about finance and employment. There is no intended policy to relax state control in other realms of higher education, particularly in areas which are seen as sensitive to ideological debates (Cheng Kai-ming, 1995).

In 1992, about 18 per cent of Chinese universities' funds were self-generated, according to the World Bank, up from about 12 per cent in 1990 and 4 per cent in 1978 (Hertling, 1995).

Currently, there are two major sources of funding:

1. Government appropriation, which is still the major source. It accounted for 97.57% of the total in 1982, and declined to 81.29% of the total in 1993.

2. Income generated by higher education institutions themselves, which increased from 2.43% in 1982 to 18.71% in 1993 (including income from tuition and fees and from universities' resource generation activities). (Min Weifang, n.d.)

It should be recognized that since late 1970's, China has increased its allocation to higher education both in absolute terms and relative to government expenditure and GNP (Min Weifang, n.d.).

The Outline stipulates the main measures for raising funds for education. The measures include:

- The government's expenditures for education will be gradually increased, to account for 4% of GNP by the end of the century.

- Governments at all levels must diligently implement the "Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Reforming the Educational System" to make sure that the increase rate of allocations for education from both the central and local governments is higher than that of regular financial income, and the average increase rate in educational expenses on a per student basis is gradually raised and that teachers' salaries and the per student public expenditures increase every year.

- Fees for non-compulsory education will be increased.

- Finance and credit may be used to increase funds for education and support school run enterprises.

- Factories, mines, enterprises, public institutions, NGOs and individuals are encouraged to contribute to the development of education to the extent that they are willing and capable to do so.

- Departments of education at all levels and all schools must work hard to obtain better returns for funds used for education (SEdC, 1993).

Many experts in China's higher education reform have observed that the most serious problem faced by Chinese universities is financial constraint. Min Weifang (1994) proposed several strategies for overcoming financial difficulties in institutions of Chinese Higher education:

- Improve efficiency by internal reorganization of universities to broaden specialties, eliminate duplication of programs and make more effective use of staff and physical resources.

- Develop cost sharing and cost recovery systems.

- The Chinese government should increase education investment to the level comparable to the international average in the long run.

It is of great practical significance to establish the legal principle of equal opportunities to higher education in light of the fact that the growth of higher education can not match the demand, and that the government will change that old system under which the government is responsible for financing and for job assignment to a new one under which the students shall pay for their education and seeking employment by themselves (Li Lianning, n.d.).

Decentralization of administrative structure

In administering higher education, China has moved to the principle that higher education should play a key role in social and economic development. This role requires that higher education institutions should be given more independence and authority in their management and curriculum development. It cannot be denied that there have been and will be problems and barriers in China's higher education interaction with the western world. It is often said in China that "challenges coexist with opportunities" (Li Wenchang & Anping Shen, 1995).

According to *The Outline*, the government must make a determined effort to change its functions and improve its supervision of schools. The government's main functions are: to formulate educational principles, policies and decrees; to determine the standards for establishing and issuing academic degrees for institutions of higher learning; to draw up plans for educational development and to examine and approve annual enrollment plans; to budget for educational expenditures, to arrange, administer and set into operation the mechanism by which funds are allocated so as to display the government's function of macro control; to gradually establish a network serving education reform and development, and to organize the examination and appraisal of the educational quality in all schools and to provide general supervision. Powers that come within the authority of schools should be resolutely delegated to them (CCCP, 1993).

It appears that rather than directly administration higher education, the government may macro-manage through legislation, allocation of funds, planning, information service, and policy guidance.

With the deepening of reform in the educational system in China, the importance of legislation has come to be recognized in adjusting the relationship between higher education and the various social sectors, in improving the macro-control of higher education, in promoting reforms, in ensuring its sound development and safeguarding the interests of the higher education institutions, of the staff and students (Li Lianning, n.d.).

Reconstruction for efficiency, effectiveness and reasonable expansion

Although autonomy and funding in higher education pose many challenges, issues of disparity are becoming more apparent. Kai-Ming Cheng points out that disparity in education is a direct result of decentralization and its effect on allocation of resources. Decentralization has caused a dilemma for the central government. Recent calls for the central government to regain authority over resources have not been received favorably, except by the least developed provinces, because such a move would mean a reduction of local autonomy (Cheng Kai-Ming, 1994).

Inequity of allocating resources is rooted in the tradition that key universities should receive more funding from the national allocations. Key universities have been identified by the government at various times in history. These universities received priorities in resources and personnel and also preferential treatment in all other related policies. The most recent identification of key universities is *Project 211* which is to develop 100 "best" higher education institutions by the 21st century. With the circulation of the document entitled "On Focusing Upon Developing a Number of Institutions of Higher Learning and Key Discipline Points" by the SEdC in July 1993, the project is being implemented in several phases. The first phase encourages local authorities and ministries to manage one or two higher learning institutions successfully. Their mission is to support via education, the industry or region that will strengthen the vital needs of the national economy. The second phase will identify a number of institutions that exemplifies the chosen characteristics by the SEdC.

Such a philosophy is likely to face unprecedented challenges when the market is established and equal opportunity becomes a necessity for fair competition. This is already happening in the case of student financial assistance, which has moved substantially from merit-based scholarships to means-test grants and loans (Cheng Kai-ming, 1994).

During the 1990's, higher education development strategy was to increase institutional size and enrollment to ensure a marked improvement towards efficiency and effectiveness. According to the 1994 SEdC statistics, 1992 and 1993 witnessed a rise of teacher-student ratio in institutions of higher learning, which were 1:5.6 and 1:6.5 respectively (Table 2).

TABLE 2 Institutions of Higher Learning 1991-1993

Item	1991	1992	1993
Institutions	1,075	1,053	1,065
Enrollment	2,043,700	2,184,400	2,535,500
FT Faculty	390,800	387,600	387,800

Source:SEdC, *The Development and Reform of Education in China*, 1993-1994.

Reform issues

Reform issues are so identified because they are important problems that must be addressed, or if not, there are likely to be important consequences. These issues are common to universities in nations throughout the world, although they will develop in ways characteristic of China.

One of the enduring issues is the tension between decentralization and state control. The arguments for decentralization are real enough--responsibility and decision-making belong at the working level where decisions to increase efficiency and effectiveness can be

carried out; gradually shift responsibility for providing resources to the locality which benefits from the investment of resources; cut unwieldy bureaucracy; democratize decision-making and put decisions in the hands of those who must live with the decisions daily; give local university administrators and faculty a feeling of responsibility and ownership of their institutions; and so forth.

On one hand, decentralization and giving local governments and enterprises more freedom and authority has worked very well in unleashing the powerful forces of a socialist market economy, and it has given a better quality of life to hundreds of millions of people. On the other hand, the tension arises because the central government does not want to lose control completely. It is after all still paying a substantial part of the cost of higher education. Thus it has the legitimate right to set policy, to guide development, to maintain quality standards, and prevent political, social, and economic turmoil which might result if there were no central control. While both positions are reasonable within the national context, one can see that the tensions may be heightened by continual reform efforts sponsored by various constituencies. It may be necessary to construct a new reality based on changing conditions and changing structures.

Another issue, now re-emerging but an enduring issue throughout the world, is the growing disparity between rich and poor. This is in contrast to the past orthodoxies, and thus it is all the more shocking that China should be charging students substantial tuition payments for higher education. Forty years of free education, based on the hope of creating an egalitarian society, is losing out to market forces. According to the Beijing Review, this year many students will be required to pay 1000 to 3000 Yuan in tuition, higher than the per capita income of many, especially students and parents from poor rural areas. Average income for farmers was reported in the same article to be 1200 Yuan. Even though there will be scholarships, it may be that university will be for the rich in the future. Even those sent overseas to study will be required to put down a deposit to make sure they return or pay for the cost of their higher education (China News Digest, January 29, 1996).

In fact this tuition charge is symptomatic of the growing disparity of opportunity between rich and poor, and the issue will remain of how to deal with it for a long time. Disparity manifests itself in the inequality of resource allocation, in the distinction between adult higher education and university education, regional disparity, the growth of private universities, and the large variation in tuition charges (Cheng Kai-ming, 1995). The issue is exacerbated by the fact that there is growing disparity between the rich areas and poor areas of the country, making it unlikely that those from poor areas will be provided the education they need to compete in the race for entrance to higher education. What effect it will have on the future of China is not certain, but that there will be consequences is sure. It may be that in the absence of government action, the rich will get richer, and the poor poorer. If government reform results in strong action to address this disparity, it will risk the consequences of interfering in the socialist market economy, and in the decentralization process.

Another issue in higher education, made more acute by recent reforms, is treatment of minorities; of course this is also a problem shared with almost every other nation. In China the issue takes several forms. Some areas of minority concentration are economically poor, thus relatively deprived. In terms of linguistic minorities, the issue of language of instruction in higher education arises. Also, reforms aimed at giving special help to minorities (somewhat like the US affirmative action programs) engender resentment in the majority, who use the same arguments used in the US by those who oppose affirmative action policies. As the system grows more decentralized, and as decisions are made lower in the hierarchy and more locally, implementing policies to help minorities succeed in the socialist market economy may be increasingly difficult.

A related issue made more apparent by decentralization is the rule of law. In previous years, the government, often represented by individual bureaucrats, was the law. With decentralization of higher education, the rule of law becomes more important. Policies must be made for the nation, legal codes developed so that there is a perception of fairness and equity among universities throughout China, and so that universities can contribute more effectively to economic development (Jiang Tong & Yang Rui). The concept of decentralization almost invites policy development, and then the development of a legal code upon which policies can be based and enforced. Otherwise, how does one protect the rights of faculty, of administrators, of students, and of institutions; how to protect property rights (or even enjoy the concept of property rights); who owns the university facilities, and who is responsible for their care; who owns patents and copyrights based on intellectual or other work, or discoveries produced at universities? These are only some of the issues which reform faces.

Finally, there is the issue of student demand, made more apparent by the rise of private and adult education, by opening the back door to students who can pay, and by decentralizing decision-making. The literature is quite in agreement that the percentage of students at university is too low, and that there is great talent lost through lack of university places. Not only that, but as Yuan Zihuang points out, secondary education has become increasingly common, and this is putting enormous demand on higher education, with no likelihood of that demand being met in the near term. But even in the long term, how shall the number of places be raised, and to whom shall they go? Reforms will have to address these issues for a long time in the foreseeable future, and there are no answers which do not provide special privileges to some and do serious damage to others. Not only are the ends or objectives at issue, but also the means to get to any proposed ends.

Recent reforms in higher education in China have made more clear the difficult issues facing the nation in governing its universities and other institutions of higher education. As China continues to democratize and decentralize, and grows as an economic powerhouse, these issues will challenge the political, economic and cultural leadership to find creative solutions which are consistent with Chinese culture and history.

The *Outline for Reform and Development of Education in China* (Central Committee) calls for the establishment of an educational system suited to a socialist market economy, recognizing that managerial skills and strategies used for university administration under a centrally planned economy were no longer appropriate in the context of the transition to a market economy.

To guide universities efficiently in their changing role in a changing society, new skills and knowledge are needed by senior university administrators in management, planning, budgeting, accounting, administration, and curriculum development. The SEdC has called on universities for greater self-financing of operating costs from tuition fees, fee-based services, and commercial and community activities to relieve pressures on Government revenues in support of tertiary education.

The NAEA

The major influence of the NAEA on future directions is due to the fact that it is the organization responsible, under the direction of the SEdC for training university administrators. The trainees in the higher education sector are university presidents and vice-presidents from all over China. They are brought to Champing to live and learn on a rural campus outside Beijing for three month and longer courses of study. The NAEA was founded under Chairman Mao in the late 1950's, and continued in existence until today, with the exception of a closing of several year's duration during the cultural revolution. After reopening in the 1970's, it operated essentially as a school for imparting Party doctrine to leaders. The method of instruction was lecture. Party leaders and government cadres would come from Beijing to give long lectures to university leaders, explicating party and government policy, and guiding the leaders in the correct ways to run their universities.

With the more open environment of the 1980's, the NAEA appeared to become less relevant to the concerns of the university leaders, but perhaps even more important to the party, now that openness and decentralization had diluted the strict control of every university from Beijing. Another thing that seemed to be happening was that the party leadership within the administration of each university had begun to collaborate closely with the academic leadership to modernize the universities and their curricula. This position had many strands, but one certainly was the encouragement of Deng Xiaoping, as expressed in various pronouncements.

Out of these changes came the need to become more modern in the training program of the NAEA. It seemed clear to some at the NAEA, as well to the consultant team from the ADB, that if the NAEA was not able to be more effective and efficient, and more modern in its curriculum and methods, it could be bypassed. Thus the proposal to the ADB for technical assistance is unusually frank in terms of the needs.

In addition, the director of the NAEA at the time, was even more frank in his assessment of the conditions of the NAEA during our first meetings in Champing. In his speech on September 11, 1995, he reviewed the work of the NAEA, pointing out that the NAEA had trained many of the presidents, vice-presidents, and deans of universities, and has a network of former trainees all over China. On the other hand, his assessment of the training consisted of the following criticisms: no consistent theory of higher education management; no application of the principles of psychology to the training of managers in higher education; no scientific methods of evaluation in higher education for training application; little use of modern technology by managers in higher education; and little understanding of modern teaching techniques in the training of higher education managers. Soon after this, the director was promoted to be in charge of all central government executive training in Beijing, something similar to executive civil service training in the USA.

The NAEA faced the following constraints in redesigning its training courses for university administrators to reflect the new skill requirements:

Lack of adequate facilities. Despite the growing demand for training, both qualitative and quantitative, NAEA can accommodate only 300 university administrators per year. Plans have been made to relocate to a new and larger training facility in 1997, subject to availability of funds.

Outdated curriculum and materials. The current training program and materials tend to reflect the requirements of the previous university management system rather than those of the rapidly evolving new system oriented towards a market economy. New courses and new training materials based on the new roles and expectations for university management must be developed. In particular, there is a need to introduce more training courses and equipment on computer applications for university management.

Outdated expertise of training staff. NAEA staff, while dedicated and well-qualified in general, have not had sufficient opportunities for professional development as the situation of higher education rapidly changes. Staff must be familiarized with university management and training practices in other countries, and their professional skills and knowledge must be upgraded so that they can provide better training for university presidents and senior administrators.

Inadequate equipment and resource materials. Modernizing curriculum and upgrading staff capacity require modern equipment and resource materials, both of which are lacking at NAEA. The lack of access to textbooks and course materials for university management training in other countries has been a constraint to modernizing the training program of NAEA.

Recognizing that substantial reforms are required in the education system to support the transition to a market economy, the Government outlined a comprehensive plan for education reform. The plan called for greater institutional autonomy at the level of higher

education, but university administrators must be retrained to cope with changing conditions. The plan also called for universities to generate more of their own funding.

This requires that university administrators be trained in new areas of management and finance. The NAEA plays a major role in the training of university administrators to manage education reform, but lacks the resources and modern techniques to do so. The present TA adopts a training-of-trainers approach to build institutional capacity and enable the NAEA to perform its role more effectively.

The aim of this Technical Assistance (TA) Project, supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), is to improve the capacity of NAEA to provide senior university administrators with management training consistent with the needs of university development in a market economy. The specific objectives of the TA are to upgrade the knowledge and skills of NAEA staff; to support modernization of NAEA curricula and training courses, particularly in the use of computers for management; to develop appropriate training materials including textbooks and videotapes; and to facilitate establishment of links with universities and institutions of higher education in other countries.

With the deepening of reform in the educational system in China, the importance of legislation has come to be recognized in adjusting the relationship between higher education and the various social sectors, in improving the macro-control of higher education, in promoting reforms, in ensuring its sound development and safeguarding the interests of the higher education institutions, of the staff and students (Li Lianning, n.d.).

Recent reforms in higher education in China have made more clear the difficult issues facing the nation in governing its universities and other institutions of higher education. As China continues to democratize and decentralize, and grows as an economic powerhouse, these issues will challenge the political, economic and cultural leadership to find creative solutions which are consistent with Chinese culture and history.

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